East Montpelier 6th of 3rd mo. 1864

My dear Son

Thy short & infrequent letters are a great comfort to us — we all long to see thee — Mary got thine of the 14th ult. last week — I have been to Stowe & went to see Henry — he appeared in first rate spirits & thinks he shall get well — he appears to have every kindness & care that affection can suggest — he showed me his letter from thee & said he had replied to it — uncle & aunt O. were in usual health —

My dear Boy 20th of 3rd mo.

We saw in the papers thy name, among the released prisoners & I was looking for thee every hour, so felt disappointed to get thy letters — but I trust I do not forget to be grateful for thy release, tho' we have all the time supposed that all exchanged prisoners had a furlough — It seems to me like a very special favor that thy turn came when it did — we hear that the Rebs. flatly refuse to exchange any more & that they were intending to blow up the prisons if Kilpatrick had entered the city — We are very anxious to hear all the particulars, that thee can afford to write of thy life, for the past five months — I do not suppose thee could tell but little of the truth in those brief unsealed letters — it appears

Thomas & Jane are well & have gone to Calais today — Leander Howe sawed 4 days at our door last week — T. has got up a very large pile of logs, sawed & split into cord wood — he sells the short wood that is fit for market very ready — wood is 4 dollars a cord — & bark 8 & 9 —
we concluded thee had
lost off thy middle book
& Mary made another
[illegible] I presume will [illegible] my
dear boy — May
the Dear Father
above have thee
still in his
precious keeping
thy own mother
R. B. Stevens

that thee was exchanged, and what does it mean that thee is paroled? & if paroled, why not sent home? We are in hopes to send the box tomorrow or next day — I do not think it is best to send any preserves or sirup, it is so apt to be broken up & hurt other things — cooked victuals I think it also unsafe to send as delays are so sure — thee can make sirup of the sugar — Maria Taber sends, with her love, the parcel of very white sugar — Sis. Mary sends the pickles — we have none except those in salt or the soft sweetened ones — the last I think would not bear the journey — if thee is afraid these will not keep without vinegar thee can put them into some sweetened water & I think they will do well — I thought it not best to put any vinegar in, to send — I think it will be necessary for thee to use great caution in thy diet — do be very very careful I wish I knew whether thee wants thy valise — it was sent home by O. W. Hill — Horace says thy over coat & blankets are in P. P. Pitkins storehouse in Alexandria — Hatch sent back one of the letters I wrote thee — in which Thomas wanted I should ask thee if thee did not want some spending money, as thee had not been paid off — I want to know what thy business is now, thee speaks of being very busy — has thee held thy place as Sargent? —

We have had a very pleasant winter, with but little snow — about two weeks ago, those that began sugaring had a fine run — we only tapped about a hundred trees after the time had partly gone by — we made about 100 pounds — —

There has been a great deal of moving in our vicinity this spring Royal Wheeler has bought Charles Templetons farm & Charles has bought Gardner Stewards — G. S. & family are now at Dr Richardsons Fisher Holms has gone to Barre & Daniel Bancroft has bought his place — George Lewis has taken the Nichols farm & David Benjamin has gone onto the Willard place — the R. Taber place is without an occupant & the stock &c. are to be sold at vendue — Diana has applied for a bill & R. is going down hill — — There has also been a very unusual amount of marrying — Edwin Foster & Fanny Clark are to be married at the meeting house at ten tomorrow morning — a general invitation given — Christopher Wing & Mary Stevens, Eben's daughter, it is thought will soon be united — David Wing's widow has bought the place by Town's where West Tobey lived — — Parks, who has been the last occupant, bought Royal's farm — Philips Hill's health has been very poor for a long time past — He & his wife & daughters & Merrill have moved to Barre Westley is married to Maria Smith & takes the home farm, Asa stays with him — John Stone with his wife & son George — about a year old, have boarded with us this winter he has chopped some — within a fortnight John has had the lung fever & Stone junr. the canker rash — the wife is always feeble — we suspended curtains from the dining room door to the alley door, & thus cut off a room for them, where they lodge & keep their sabbath the 7th day of the week — they keep it so strictly that they really look unhappy

3/24/64 do

Thomas has hired a man by the name of Rideout from Woodbury to work this summer - he expects him tomorrow - wages & in fact every thing bear an enormous price here this season I think he pays $24 per mo. butter is 36 cts. cheese 16 - sugar 16 eggs do cotton cloth 40 cts. per yard &c. &c - Olympia Brown a Universalist, a female Reverend, preaches at the east village once in 4 weeks - Charly has just returned from meeting - she has the largest gatherings of any one that attends there - Ballou & Spencer have preached occasionally through the winter - -

The temperance folks have quite waked up in the village they have closed up a number of shops we hear - The fair ground is being covered, in part, with hospital buildings - & the invalids from Brattleboro' are to be removed here, I understand - Orlana is now at home on a visit - she seems pleased with her situation & I think has really improved in her manners & general appearance - Ann says she stands really well in the estimation of all at the Semminary - Thee often hears from Ann I suppose, so I need not tell thee of her health & comfortable getting along -

Timothy & James remain at Denver - going off occasionally a 100 or 200 miles on errands - they seem to enjoy it pretty well - T. seemed to think he should almost like to be in thy place at Richmond should hardly have felt satisfied not to see both sides of the thing. It reminded of the lines "Then let him come & be the slave, & I will be the free" - I shall not cease to regret that thy mind has become so soured against friends - I must think if thee understood the whole thing, thee would feel differently - it really sounded cold to me to have the close thy letter "your loving son," - The powers at Washington have done I suppose all they think they can, for those conscienciously opposed to fighting - they are to be assign'd duty in the hospitals or among the Freedmen - Friends are doing an abundance for the colored people in the way of clothing & teaching in all parts of the country I believe - a great deal of clothing has been sent by friends & others from Vt. We have packed a barrel & sent from this neighborhood - - Howard wants to send uncle Willie something & so puts in the piece of dried beef - I hope to get a very long letter from thee soon - I did not write to Richmond but once, fearing if our letters were too frequent - they would be less likely to get to thee -

truly the book to be prized above all others and which claims more attention than (I fear) it always gets. How thankful we should be for our Spiritual freedom.

The rule for moral conduct, directions for a life of simplicity and holiness are found alone in the word of God and these directions if followed will gain for us substantial peace and never-ending happiness. In it are contained the most precious promises, and brightest examples of purity.

If every one in the world were to obey its precepts, and live a life holiness what a paradise this earth might yet be notwithstanding the blight and curse of Sin.

— I wish I could write something of interest but it is time to go to prayers I will remember you while there in our quiet chapel, and may you be prosperous and happy for aye. Good bye. I hope to hear from you very soon. Accept with

the love of your friend
Nancie

To Willie

My darling brother:- Thy excellent letter was gladly received and I presume that I shall write a twelve mo. in answer to it, but I thought I would write a little now. I am glad that thee has the place thee has now if thee likes it. I always thought some such position would be good for thee. I supposed by what Henry wrote before that he would not accept the Captaincy and was surprised to hear he was going back into the company again. Miss C. says tell your brother he knows what my opinions are about fighting, though I think it is perfectly honorable and highly desirable to be in such a place yet I should be glad to see him in some high office in the army. She expects to live to see the day when thee is Col. She makes all manner of fun about Lieut — as soon as she found out I did not care for him. She gave an exact and comical picture of him "in the corner" the other day. She can see through uniforms to the real worth. She could not bear him or the Capt;

I suppose Nancie has told thee all the news, so I can only swear to all she has said. I attended a lecture at the other village by Dr. Holland — Timothy Titcomb. the subject was "Shirking and Working." it was an excellent affair. — The teachers and Senior Class only went. and of those the minus measles ones could not go. seventy of the soldiers are sick with them at the other ville, It seems too bad away from their homes, I was very much alarmed to hear thee had been so sick. I do hope thee will be very careful. I am sure I trust that thy feelings as regards thy returning are true. I should feel very awfully if thee felt discouraged. for I remember what Proff. Lee said. I have not heard from home for a month. mother was at cousin Rowland's when she wrote, Ordanna was keeping house. sic transit! what will come next, I do not think Tom can get game, does thee? I am very well to-day and have been real happy — I hope thee has been the same, Levi has written again. He could not keep out his silly speeches. asked "how many letters have you written to Me!" when he finds out I trust he will know, I shall write to him that the number is greater than I can count. — I like to make Levi show his temper, I pray that thee may be preserved safe from harm of any kind, I send love enough for a whole Regiment of common men.

Farewell, my dear brother
Ann.

I have copied for you the Hymn I spoke of. thinking perhaps you had not seen it. if you have do not feel insulted by this poor copy of it. If you have not seen it please accept it with my best wishes. which are as good for you as though I sent a printed copy of it to you. Miss Cobb likes it very much. I think I like her almost as well as Miss Fuller though I am not yet so well acquainted with her.

— She does her part for us and if we are not wiser when we go away than when we came it will be no fault of hers. —

I do not find very much time to read this term though sometimes I take a little time. We are reading the life of Sir Philip Sidney. It is very interesting and written beautifully. I wish you could help us read it. You say you are coming home again sometime so I hope at least to see you. You say the Bible is nearly all you find time to read. It is